

The Bookshelf.

By DELTA.

FEUILLETON.

Some Fisher Unwin New Publications.

I HOUGH many books have been issued dealing with the public social life of the Second Empire, there is none that we remember that gives us such pleasant glimpses of the private life of the Emperor and Empress as are shown in Dr. Barthez's book, which is entitled "The Empress Eugenie and Her Circle," and of which an English translation has been made by Mr. Bernard Miall, for Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, who has issued it at 10/6 net. The work takes the form of a collection of letters, written only for intimate reading, by Dr. Barthez, who was physician to the Prince Imperial. Too many memoirs of the Second Empire fatigue us with the cheap pomposity and artificiality of that sterile period; but Dr. Barthez—who writes from Saint-Cloud and Biarritz—was fortunate in seeing the natural, spontaneous, and human side of the Imperial couple. His professional duties were somewhat superogatory, the Prince being entirely in the hands of a masterful English nurse. When he is not required, or when the house party grows too boisterous for his taste, he slips upstairs to write to his "dear and good Octavia." The doctor gives us a singular picture of the holiday Court, yet a pleasanter one than that left by most writers of the time: the Emperor, a little heavy and obstinate, but simple, kindly, actively benevolent, and evidently lovable; the Empress, high-spirited and prejudiced, with the manners of a romping school-girl; both always on the point of falling victims to ennuis, and to escape it throwing themselves into the ordinary amusements of the uncultivated; excursion after excursion, picnic after picnic, and in the evening, games, mostly of a kind that involves active "ragging," or the discussion of such subjects as magnatism, table-turning, etc., etc. Only towards the end of the book do we find men of the calibre of Merimee commended to amuse the Imperial circle. The book should be read as giving a picture of two historical figures in their unaffected moments.

Christmas: In Ritual and Tradition. Christian and Pagan.

Mr. Clement A. Miles has written, and Mr. T. Fisher Unwin has published, a volume bearing the title of our headline, which throws an exceedingly interesting light on the ritual observed in Christmas festivities. That much of the ritual observed in religious and other festivals are survivals of Paganism many people are aware, but how Christian and Pagan custom and festivity became blended into one is a matter that is known only to those who have made a serious study of the subject. In Mr. Miles' work an attempt has been made to give some idea of the manner in which Christmas, in and has been, celebrated in various parts of Europe, and to separate as far as possible, the Pagan and Christian elements, showing, however, how one has influenced the other, many heathen practices having taken on a Christian form, while the Church's celebration has gained in warmth and humanity by contact with earlier festival customs. The first part of the book is devoted to studies of the Christian aspects of the festival as reflected in poetry, ritual and drama, while in the second part are described, and when possible explained, numerous Pagan customs and superstitions belonging to Christmas and its neighbouring festivals. Care has been taken by Mr. Miles to preserve the charm and picturesqueness proper to these festivals, and at the same time make his work of value to serious students.

Marriage.

A new novel by Mr. H. G. Wells is always an event in the literary world; indeed one might say a startling event of late, so candidly does he write on social evils and matters of sex. His new novel "Marriage," however, contains nothing to shock readers, though the subject in Mr.

Wells' hands might easily have been made taboo to fastidious readers. It is about a marriage that at first promised badly, but ended happily. As usual, Mr. Wells has used the book as a vehicle to convey to the world at large, for he has undoubtedly a large and intellectual audience, his ideas on politics, socialism, woman's suffrage, philanthropic fads, and, in short, on almost every popular movement going. But however we may differ with Mr. Wells, he is an author who is always worth reading, though it is grievous to think of the great moral and social mentor he might have been had he not run amok on the sex problem.

Banned Books.

Mr. Clement Shorter, who is the editor of, and who contributes every week a most delightful literary letter to the "Sphere," has been delivering himself of a protest against the banning by the Circulating Libraries' Association of "The

Daughters of Ishmael," by Mr. and Mrs. Kaufman; "The Hussey," by Mr. James Lancaster; and Strindberg's "Confessions of a Fool" (English translation). Mr. Shorter, while he sees nothing to object to in any of these books, and who praises highly the Kaufman's collaboration as "a work of the highest moral value," sees clearly, as all sensible people must see, that this banning is the finest advertisement these books could have. Now, that there are many social evils that require removing is plain. And a united public protest is imperative to put down this particular evil, for social evils, such as are dealt with in the Kaufman's book, would become instantly non-existent in the light of publicity. Concerning this question of immoral books, it has always seemed to us that a book is made moral or immoral according to the design of the writer. For the designedly immoral book we have the deepest and the most execrable contempt. But a greater dis-

Eugenics and Love.

The science of eugenics as taught by the majority of its teachers would seem to bar sentiment in the choosing of mates. Sir J. Crichton Brown's views on the marriage problem, and his interesting reference the other day to "Love at First Sight," has caused a good deal of discussion. In the course of the paper which he read at the conference of the sanitary inspectors in Sheffield, he said: "I am a believer in a love match not only from a romantic but from the eugenic point of view." Apropos of this deliverance, it is interesting to note that the Putnam's have published a little book by the great Norwegian feminist, Ellen Kley, entitled "Love and Ethics," in which the author applies the theories of eugenics to those intimate questions which concern every man and woman.

Gift Book for Boys.

A few weeks and the gift season will be upon us, and parents, teachers and guardians will be grappling with the question of which book is most suitable to give their own boy or girl. A book for

REVIEWS.

The Turnstile. By A. E. W. Mason. (London: Hodder and Stoughton. Auckland: Wildman and Arrey.)

That the world is a very circus-scribed place, and that some marriages are indeed arranged by the powers that he will be strongly realised by the reader long before he reaches the end of Mr. Mason's very sterling romance, which relates how an unknown girl in South America sends a cable message, on the eve of his journey, to an Arctic explorer about to essay the discovery of the South Pole, and expressive of her heart-felt wishes for a triumphant return, a message which he never troubles to read, so concentrated are his thoughts on his projected task. Years after he meets this girl in London and marries her, still unaware that he was the hero of her girlhood, and in almost as great ignorance of her real character as he was of the contents of her cabled message. Mr. Mason is better known in this Dominion we think, as a writer than as a very able member of the House of Commons, where he is looked upon as a no inconsiderable authority on Indian matters. What he thinks of Western education for Indian Princes is vigorously told in his superbly written "Broken Road." As representative of an important industrial constituency Mr. Mason takes himself seriously. But not too seriously, as will be seen in "The Turnstile" which, while it is eminently a novel of high politics, is also largely a novel of high politics. Vocation would seem to be the point on which his story turns. For Mr. Mason argues clearly that whatever deviations a man may make from his true vocation during his career he will always be found at its most momentous turns, grappling with despair and regret for not having followed the path ordained for him by fate, or what you will. Captain Baines, the hero of this story, was ordained for exploration, but turned aside to enter the parliamentary arena for which he had no vocation. He marries a girl who was prepared to love him "for the dangers he had passed," because she had money, and could help him in his political career. But he learns to love her for her fine qualities and in the light of that love learns that his duty lies in following his true vocation of exploration. Much as we appreciate what may be termed as the sentimental part of Mr. Mason's fine story, "The Turnstile" is most interesting to us as an expression of his views on the English Land Bill, and the qualities he thinks necessary that the aspirant to parliamentary representation should have. Character, Mr. Mason stoutly asseverates, is the only thing that really counts in the House of Commons. And we cordially agree with him. It is the only thing that really counts in any walk of life. Our readers on no account must miss "The Turnstile."

Mrs. Lancelot. A Comedy of Assumptions. By Maurine Hewlett. (London: Macmillan and Co. Auckland: Wildman and Arrey.)

Mrs. Hewlett has in "Mrs. Lancelot" chosen as his period that of the reign of William IV, during the days when the passing of the Reform Bill was the most important measure of the day. Mrs. Lancelot was the very young wife of Charles Lancelot, a clerk in the foreign office who was thoroughly imbued with the conviction that a great career was before him. To be sure, his present position, though he was a man of good family who had influential connections, was a lowly one, but it had been said more than once that Lord Monthemer, a persona grata at Court, and a rising star in the political world, had his eye on him. But though Lancelot saw his Marquis become a Duke, and the Prime Minister of England, he still remained a clerk, till that red letter day when the Prime Minister's eye fell upon Mrs. Lancelot at Mrs. Mayduke's, who was upon this auspicious occasion the Duke's hostess. Though the Duke was married and had grown-up sons he had still a great reputation for gallantry and a great liking for Mrs. Lancelot grew up in him, which society perceiving, and though it had barely condescended to recognise Mrs. Lancelot's existence before, now poured upon her favours and invitations in his name with the Duke. And as Lancelot thought so it fell out and he had the satisfaction of being appointed secretary to the Duke which involved his residing in a suite of apartments in the ducal house. A trial of Mrs. Lancelot's virtue proved to the Duke that she was honest and henceforward, though his love for



LOOKING BACKWARD.

"Daughters of Ishmael," by Mr. and Mrs. Kaufman; "The Hussey," by Mr. James Lancaster; and Strindberg's "Confessions of a Fool" (English translation). Mr. Shorter, while he sees nothing to object to in any of these books, and who praises highly the Kaufman's collaboration as "a work of the highest moral value," sees clearly, as all sensible people must see, that this banning is the finest advertisement these books could have. Now, that there are many social evils that require removing is plain. And a united public protest is imperative to put down this particular evil, for social evils, such as are dealt with in the Kaufman's book, would become instantly non-existent in the light of publicity. Concerning this question of immoral books, it has always seemed to us that a book is made moral or immoral according to the design of the writer. For the designedly immoral book we have the deepest and the most execrable contempt. But a greater dis-

boys which we specially recommend to any donor who does not think 7/6 too much to pay for their Christmas gift, is Bayard Taylor's "Boys of Other Countries" (Putnam's). The book is profusely illustrated, and the coloured frontispiece quite a work of art.

A Holiday Companion.

Readers of "Punch" who are acquainted with "The Rabbits" and also those readers who remember that delightful mélange, "The Day's Play," will be delighted to hear that Mr. Milne, the "A.A.M." of "Punch," has another book coming out with the Methuen's, entitled "The Holiday Round." As in "The Day's Play," it is a collection of sketches and dialogues that have already appeared in that leading humorous journal. There is no need to dilate on the many excellencies of Mr. Milne's work. The fact that he is a regular and a valued contributor to "Punch" is sufficient voucher.